



AETC News Clips

Randolph AFB, Texas



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Roddy Stinson: Reader's Kelly-toxin concern: Was diazinon used to kill pests?

Web Posted: 12/01/2005 12:00 AM CST

San Antonio Express-News

On the Sleuthing Trail ...

CASE: "Roddy, I just read a Reuters report, 'Job exposure to pesticide may raise cancer risk,' which summarizes information in the American Journal of Epidemiology about the dangers of being exposed to diazinon.

"Several years ago, when you were looking into environmental contamination and health issues at Kelly AFB, you wrote a column about the pesticides used at the base, but I don't remember if diazinon was mentioned.

"This is something you might want to investigate."

INVESTIGATION: For readers who aren't familiar with the pesticide in question ...

"Diazinon is the common name of an organophosphate used to control pest insects in soil, on ornamental plants and on fruit and vegetable crops. It is also used to control household pests such as flies, fleas and cockroaches. ... Exposure may occur by contact with contaminated soils or contaminated runoff water or groundwater." (Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry)

Beginning in 1993, researchers at the National Cancer Institute in Rockville, Md., enrolled 23,106 males from farm families in a study of the health effects of exposure to pesticides.

Subsequently, the researchers found evidence of "a possible association" between lung cancer and leukemia and longtime exposure to diazinon.

This evidence was presented in a recent issue of the American Journal of Epidemiology.

In the same article, the researchers cautioned:

"Because these results were based on small numbers, additional analyses are necessary as more cases accrue to clarify whether diazinon is associated with cancer risk in humans."

Easy conclusion:

Anyone exposed to diazinon for a considerable amount of time — whether on or off a military base — should (1) follow the ongoing study with interest and (2) bone up on the symptoms of lung cancer and leukemia.

As for a Kelly angle to this epidemiological story ...

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A search of the Express-News archives found only one Stinson column related to pesticides and local military bases.

In the spring of 2001 — acting on a tip from a caller — I learned and subsequently reported that the Air Force had conducted an environmental analysis of soil excavated from Tejada Estates East, a Lackland AFB neighborhood where old, multifamily housing had been demolished to make room for new single-family homes.

The analysis found two "constituents of concern" — chlordane and heptachlor — which the Air Force used as pesticides until 1988, when the Environmental Protection Agency banned them.

Chlordane can cause damage to the nervous system, the digestive system and the liver.

Heptachlor is toxic to humans and animals and can damage the nervous system.

The toxic soil was trucked to an EPA-approved landfill.

That ended my investigation.

But a question I posed at the time has never been officially or unofficially answered:

"If the soil at one military housing site was contaminated by chlordane and heptachlor, what about other similar housing sites?"

Back to Kelly, cancer and diazinon ...

While diazinon may have been used at Kelly, a search of several Express-News databases found no mention of it.

A 2002 study of the mortality of Kelly AFB workers found that civilians who worked at the base between 1981 and 2000 suffered "no increase in mortality." Presumably that includes deaths associated with lung cancer and leukemia.

In 2004, federal researchers reported finding higher than expected levels of lung cancer and leukemia in some ZIP codes around Kelly, but they concluded that the illnesses were not linked to Kelly pollutants.

If that info leaves you with something less than an eased mind and a settled stomach, I understand.

Join the club.

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P.C. company fighting proposed ban Air Force wants to blacklist Aztec Environmental from federal government waste disposal contracts

By Ed Offley News Herald Writer 747-5079 / eoffley@pcnh.com

A Panama City waste disposal company facing a ban on receiving future federal government contracts has filed a federal lawsuit to block the move, according to environmental activists and the company's lawyer.

Aztec Environmental Inc. is facing the contracting blacklist as a result of allegations that it violated federal environmental protection laws and immigration and labor statutes involving an asbestos-removal contract at Hurlburt Field in Okaloosa County. The Air Force also accuses Aztec and one of its subsidiaries of violating environmental regulations surrounding several waste removal contracts at Tyndall Air Force Base.

Air Force Deputy General Counsel Steven A. Shaw on Sept. 8 issued a "memorandum in support of the proposed debarments" of Aztec Environmental Inc. and its subsidiary, Big Wheel Recycling Inc. The recommendation applies to both companies, Aztec President Debora King Livingston, her husband, Vice President Jimmy F. Livingston, seven other corporate subsidiaries and 22 other individuals listed as directors, officers or employees.

According to federal law, placement on the list would exclude Aztec Environmental from receiving future federal contracts or subcontracts that involve federal financial and nonfinancial assistance and benefits. It would not affect the existing contracts that Aztec has with the Air Force.

The Livingstons flatly deny all of the allegations in the Air Force memorandum, their attorney said Tuesday.

Aztec filed the civil complaint in U.S. District Court in Tallahassee on Oct. 26, said Panama City attorney William Harrison, who represents Aztec but is not involved with the lawsuit itself. Harrison said the U.S. Department of Justice formally cleared Aztec, Big Wheel and company officers of wrongdoing after a federal grand jury declined to issue indictments in the case last December.

"The federal government could not find any criminal wrongdoing and is now trying to harass these people out of business," Harrison said.

New details of the Air Force's dispute with Aztec and Big Wheels Recycling emerged this week when the environmental organization Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility, or PEER, released the full text of the Air Force's nine-page debarment memorandum. PEER obtained the document from the Air Force under the federal Freedom of Information Act, said PEER Florida Director Jerry Phillips.

PEER, which has conducted its own investigation of Aztec and its subsidiaries, has been critical of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's handling of complaints against the companies.

The Air Force's primary complaint against Aztec and its owners stems from alleged violations of federal environmental and employment laws during the cleanup of a building at Hurlburt Field, the home base of the U.S. Air Force Special Operations Command. The memorandum accuses Aztec of improperly and deliberately removing debris containing regulated "friable asbestos"; dumping it at a companyowned

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landfill that was not certified to receive hazardous substances; and falsely stating that the materials had been transferred to a certified hazardous waste landfill when they had not been removed.

In addition, the memo reveals that the Air Force has accused Aztec of violating environmental protection laws under a 2002 contract with Tyndall Air Force Base to remove oil, grease and sump pump waste from 28 storage tanks at the base. The complaint accuses Aztec with illegally dumping the material at a wastewater facility in Port St. Joe. In addition, the Air Force accuses Big Wheels of illegally dumping sludge material collected from Tyndall.

The Air Force also accuses Aztec of forging the names of two employees on a required hazardous materials handling course certificate before they performed a lead removal contract at two firing ranges at Tyndall.

The Air Force memo reiterates earlier allegations that Aztec had knowingly hired illegal aliens to work on the contract projects, and submitted false Social Security numbers for 21 employees who were illegals. Moreover, the Air Force memo reveals, the Department of Labor investigators found that the company owed 43 employees, most of whom were illegals, a total of \$38,754 in back wages.

Harrison said the Aztec officers denied those accusations.

Federal agents raided Aztec's corporate office on Harrison Avenue on April 7, 2004, seizing company records as part of a multi-agency task force probe of the companies.

Livingston confirmed to The News Herald that the company had filed suit against the Air Force to block the debarment.

"They have given us a chance to challenge it and that's what we have done," she said.

Harrison provided The News Herald two letters from the Department of Justice to the Livingstons in January 2005 regarding the Aztec Environmental investigation. In one, Senior Trial Attorney Daniel Dooher wrote, "This is to confirm that Aztec Environmental is no longer considered a target of a criminal investigation." The second letter, from Assistant U.S. Attorney Stephen Preisser, noted that "a number of individuals" employed by Aztec on the Hurlburt Field contract were illegal immigrants using fraudulent resident alien cards, but that the individual responsible for obtaining the false papers "was not associated with Aztec."

The Livingstons' Washington-based attorney handling the lawsuit, Beau McGrath, could not be reached for comment.

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Companies Face Penalty Over Asbestos Disposal
Skip directly to the full story.

By MIKE SALINERO msalinero@tampatrib.com

Published: Nov 28, 2005

TAMPA - -- A group of recycling and landfill companies with ties to top Republican fundraisers may lose the ability to land federal procurement contracts because of environmental and immigration violations.

The Air Force has proposed barring Aztec Environmental Inc., Big Wheel Recycling Inc. and seven associated companies from competing for federal contracts. A memorandum supporting the action accuses the companies of improperly disposing asbestos in their Panama City landfill.

The memorandum also alleges the companies knowingly used illegal immigrants to remove asbestos at Hurlburt Field in Walton County, submitting false Social Security numbers for them.

The companies have filed a lawsuit against the Air Force seeking to forestall the debarment.

Florida Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility obtained the Air Force document through the Freedom of Information Act. The group has criticized the Florida Department of Environmental Protection for failing to prosecute the companies on environmental violations.

"The Air Force document confirms what we've been saying all along: That there were numerous environmental violations at the site and the DEP ignored the violations as have the federal agencies," Florida PEER director Jerry Phillips said.

Florida DEP spokesman Anthony De Luise said the agency was not aware of the Air Force memorandum but will follow up with its own investigation.

"If needed, we will take action," De Luise said. "But we can't make a snap judgment; we have to do our own investigation on this."

Political Connections

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